

## Senate Resolution 1162

By: Senators Thomas of the 54th, Goggans of the 7th, Hawkins of the 49th and Moody of the 56th

## A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Including Traumatic Brain Injury Facilities in the State Health Plan  
2 Study Committee; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability for any  
4 American age 45 or younger, and there is great concern over the unmet needs of people with  
5 brain injuries in Georgia; and

6 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that there are 1.4  
7 million new traumatic brain injuries every year in the United States, which are primarily  
8 caused by motor vehicle accidents, falls, sports injuries, and violence; and

9 WHEREAS, of the 57,232 Georgians who were taken to a hospital for treatment of a  
10 traumatic brain injury in 2007, 6,764 sustained injuries that were severe enough to require  
11 admission to the hospital, and of these people with severe injuries, it is estimated that 34  
12 percent of them will be permanently disabled; and

13 WHEREAS, approximately 15,000 other Georgians each year are discharged from hospitals  
14 after receiving treatment for brain injuries that are acquired as a result of strokes, tumors, and  
15 other medical conditions; and

16 WHEREAS, these statistics only reveal the number of people treated for brain injuries in  
17 Georgia hospitals and do not include people who seek treatment from other medical facilities,  
18 out-of-state facilities, or not at all; nor do these figures include members of the military,  
19 where traumatic brain injury has been identified as the "signature wound" of the Iraq War;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, it is estimated that approximately 187,000 Georgians have a long-term or  
22 lifelong disability relating to a traumatic brain injury, with an estimated 18,700 of them

23 requiring ongoing, intensive services and supports due to the neurobehavioral issues they  
24 present to their families and communities; and

25 WHEREAS, in the United States, the average lifetime cost of care for a person with a  
26 moderate to severe brain injury can range from \$600,000.00 to \$1,875,000.00, and the costs  
27 for a person with a severe brain injury, including someone with significant neurobehavioral  
28 issues, can reach as high as \$4 million; and

29 WHEREAS, the average lifetime costs of care for people with moderate to severe brain  
30 injuries is often higher because of a lack of timely and appropriate services and  
31 rehabilitation; and

32 WHEREAS, many people with moderate to severe brain injuries require post-acute  
33 residential services from a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Facility in order to improve their  
34 quality of life, live in the community or the least restrictive and most appropriate community  
35 based setting possible, and reduce the use of state funds for inappropriate and ineffective  
36 services; and

37 WHEREAS, TBI Facilities provide post-acute residential rehabilitation, including 24 hour  
38 supervision and highly structured skilled rehabilitation therapies, and appropriate long-term  
39 living options that would prevent institutionalization of people with brain injuries in either  
40 geriatric nursing homes or state hospitals; and

41 WHEREAS, a TBI Facility is defined in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated as a place  
42 which is devoted to providing treatment and rehabilitative care for over 24 hours to persons  
43 with traumatic brain injuries and is not classified as a hospital, nursing home, intermediate  
44 care facility, or personal care home; and

45 WHEREAS, Georgia currently has six designated TBI Facilities, including Safehaven in  
46 Walker County, Shepherd Pathways in DeKalb County, Restore Neurobehavioral Center in  
47 Fulton County and Gwinnett County, Palm Creek Farm in Gwinnett County, Walton  
48 Transitional Living Center in Richmond County, and Southern Crescent TBI Center in Henry  
49 County; and

50 WHEREAS, there is no public funding available for transitional residential rehabilitation and  
51 lifelong living services for people with traumatic brain injuries, and the only public funding  
52 available to support people with traumatic brain injuries is the Medicaid Independent Care

53 Waiver Program; however, it will not provide funding for services in TBI Facilities because  
54 Georgia's State Health Plan excludes TBI Facilities, defining them as institutions; and

55 WHEREAS, as a result, a large number of Georgians with brain injuries are not getting the  
56 appropriate rehabilitation they need and are thus ending up in costly settings, such as nursing  
57 homes, prisons, or state hospitals, or they are placed out of state or end up homeless; and

58 WHEREAS, the inappropriate placement of individuals suffering from traumatic brain  
59 injuries greatly affects the individual and their families and results in higher costs of care,  
60 lost wages, and lost opportunities to contribute both personally and economically to local  
61 communities throughout Georgia; and

62 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to analyze the feasibility of amending the State Health  
63 Plan to include TBI Facilities and how public funding for such facilities would affect  
64 Georgia.

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate  
66 Including Traumatic Brain Injury Facilities in the State Health Plan Study Committee to be  
67 composed of five members to be appointed by the President of the Senate who shall  
68 designate one member as chairperson. The chairperson shall call all meetings of the  
69 committee.

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions,  
71 needs, issues, and problems as described above and recommend any actions or legislation  
72 that the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may conduct such  
73 meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable  
74 it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the  
75 objectives and purposes of this resolution. The members of the committee shall receive the  
76 allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.  
77 The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member of the  
78 committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. The funds  
79 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds  
80 appropriated to the Senate. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and  
81 recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be  
82 made on or before December 31, 2010. The committee shall stand abolished on December  
83 31, 2010.